



CALFED BAY-DELTA PROGRAM

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, California 95814
<http://calfed.ca.gov>
Public Information Line 1-800-700-5752

(916) 657-2666
FAX (916) 654-9780

Commonly Asked Questions About the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

What Is the Bay-Delta System?

The Bay-Delta system is an intricate web of waterways created at the junction of the San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers and the watershed that feeds them. The estuary, where salt water from the Pacific Ocean flows through San Francisco Bay and mixes with fresh water from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, touches the lives of millions of Californians and people across the nation who have never seen it. Fresh water flows through the Delta -- a network of natural and man-made waterways -- to help supply two-thirds of the state's population with drinking water, and irrigate 200 types of crops in the fertile Central Valley, including 45 percent of the nation's fruits and vegetables.

Historically, the Delta was a vast region of wetlands teeming with wildlife. In the 19th century, pioneer settlers diked the islands to create farmland. Today, the distinctive estuary ecosystem supports more than 750 species of fish, animals, and birds, including waterfowl migrating on the Pacific Flyway. It supplies and sustains fisheries, wildlife refuges, and 40,000 acres of critical wetlands.

The biological health and the biodiversity of the ecosystem depends upon the quality and abundance of water that flows through the estuary. At times, California's need for water from the Bay-Delta system to serve its people and economy has competed with environmental needs.

What Is the CALFED Bay-Delta Program?

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is a cooperative effort among the public and state and federal agencies with management and regulatory responsibility in the Bay-Delta system (see letterhead). It was formed in 1994 as part of the Bay-Delta Accord to address the water management and environmental problems associated with the Bay-Delta system, including ecosystem restoration, water quality, water use efficiency and levee system integrity.

The mission of the CALFED Program is to develop a long-term, comprehensive plan that will restore ecological health and improve water management for beneficial uses of the Bay-Delta system.

CALFED Agencies

California	The Resources Agency	Federal	Environmental Protection Agency	Department of Agriculture
	Department of Fish and Game		Department of the Interior	
	Department of Water Resources		Fish and Wildlife Service	
	California Environmental Protection Agency		Bureau of Reclamation	
	State Water Resources Control Board		U.S. Geological Survey	
	Department of Food and Agriculture		U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	
				Natural Resources Conservation Service
				U.S. Forest Service
				Department of Commerce
				National Marine Fisheries Service
				Western Area Power Administration

What Are the Phases of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program?

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is divided into three phases. Completed in September 1996, Phase I identified and defined the problems confronting the Bay-Delta system. Also during Phase I, a mission statement and guiding principles were developed, along with Program objectives and an array of potential actions to meet them. During Phase II, currently underway, the CALFED Program is conducting a comprehensive programmatic environmental review process. Because the CALFED solution area is so large, and because CALFED is approaching its task in an integrated, comprehensive way, environmental review must be conducted on a very broad level. Phase II will conclude with approval of the final programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). Program implementation will take place in Phase III. Site-specific, detailed environmental review will occur during Phase III, prior to the implementation of each proposed action. Implementation of the CALFED solution is expected to take 30 years or more.

What Is the Programmatic EIS/EIR?

As part of its analysis of potential Bay-Delta system solutions, and to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, CALFED is preparing a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR). This document identifies – on a broad or “programmatic” level – potential impacts of the proposed preferred program alternative. The programmatic nature of the document is intended to help agencies and the public make decisions on the broad methods to meet program purposes. Upon certification of this document, which will take place after public review and comment, individual, site-specific environmental impact analysis will be conducted as necessary prior to implementation.

The draft programmatic EIS/EIR is available from CALFED and at major libraries throughout the state.

What Is the Revised Phase II Report?

The Revised Phase II Report primarily focuses on the draft preferred program alternative, including background, description, and implementation plan. It is designed for the general reader so that everyone can provide informed, focused comment. The full draft Programmatic EIS/EIR, appendices and supporting technical reports comprises thousands of pages.

What Is the Public Comment Period?

Public review of environmental documents is required by NEPA – at least 30 days – and CEQA – at least 45 days. Due to the comprehensive nature of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, however, the comment period on draft programmatic EIS/EIR released June 1999 is 90 days to give the public an opportunity to more fully review the documents for evaluation. Because the public has had input

since the beginning of the process, many ideas have already been incorporated into the Program or eliminated for technical reasons identified in pre-feasibility studies, modeling studies and other detailed analysis. New ideas will be similarly evaluated.

How Can the Public Comment?

There will be 15 public hearings throughout the state starting August 18 and running through September 22. The public may comment at any of these meetings, or may submit comments in writing to Mr. Rick Breitenbach, CALFED Bay-Delta Program, 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155, Sacramento, CA 95814.

What Happens to Comments?

Since the beginning of its activities, CALFED has solicited public feedback on all aspects of the Program's development, including goals, solution principles, priorities and implementation. Comments received during the public review period for the draft programmatic EIS/EIR will be grouped in categories and forwarded as they come in to the appropriate technical staff for evaluation. If necessary, technical analysis will be conducted as part of this evaluation process. Comments then will be incorporated into a final programmatic EIS/EIR, which will also be circulated for public review and comment prior to signing of the Record of Decision and Certification.

What is the Preferred Program Alternative?

A draft preferred program alternative is identified in the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR. It consists of a set of broadly described programmatic actions that set the long-term, overall direction of the CALFED Program. The preferred program alternative uses eight program elements to carry out strategies to solve problems in the four resource areas: ecosystem health, water quality, water supply reliability and levee system integrity. It is a comprehensive plan – actions are intended to take place in an integrated framework and not independently.

What is "Adaptive Management"?

No long-term plan for management of the complex Bay-Delta system can predict exactly how the system will respond to Program actions or foresee events such as earthquakes, climate change or the introduction of new species. Adaptive management is an essential component of the preferred alternative. It is necessary to monitor the system continuously and adapt actions that are taken to restore ecological health and improve water management. These adaptations will be necessary as conditions change and more is learned about the system and how it responds. The program's objectives will not change, but the actions may be adjusted to assure the durability of the solution.

What are the Strategies?

The draft preferred alternative relies on strategies to solve the problems in four resource areas – ecosystem health, levee system integrity, water quality and water supply reliability. Actions from the Program Elements contribute to carrying out these strategies.

Ecosystem Restoration Strategy – Focuses on rehabilitation, protection or restoration of ecological processes that create and maintain habitats needed by fish, wildlife and plant species dependent on the Delta and its tributary systems.

Water Quality Strategy – Objective is to provide good water quality for all beneficial uses.

Levee System Improvement Strategy – Improve and protect the integrity of the Delta levee system.

Water Management Strategy – Ensure water supply reliability by increasing the utility of available water supplies; improving access to existing or new water supplies for environmental, urban and agricultural beneficial uses; improving flexibility of water supply management and demand to reduce conflicts among beneficial uses.

What Are the Program Elements?

CALFED has developed eight programs to carry out the Program strategies. Each of the elements contributes to improvements in the four resource areas, and is a major program of its own. Actions in the program elements will be implemented in stages over the next 30 years.

Long-term Levee Protection Plan – Provides significant improvements in the reliability of levees in the CALFED problem area to benefit all users of Delta and Suisun Marsh water and land.

Water Quality Program – Makes significant reductions in point and non-point source pollution for the benefit of all water uses and the Bay-Delta ecosystem.

Ecosystem Restoration Program – Provides significant improvements in habitat, restoration of critical ecological processes and species populations, and reduces conflict with other Bay-Delta system resources.

Water Use Efficiency Program – Encourages water recycling and efficient use of water for agricultural purposes, urban purposes, and managed wetlands by providing support and incentives at the local level, including expanded planning, technical and financial assistance.

Water Transfers Program – Provides a framework of actions, policies and processes to facilitate, encourage, and streamline an active and properly regulated water market that will allow water to move between users, including environmental uses, on a voluntary and compensated basis.

Watershed Program – Promotes locally-led watershed management activities and protections

relevant to achieving CALFED goals through financial and technical assistance.

Storage – New groundwater and/or surface storage will be developed and constructed, together with aggressive implementation of water conservation, recycling, and a protective water transfer market. During Stage 1, CALFED will evaluate and determine the appropriate mix of surface water and groundwater storage, identify acceptable project and initiate permitting and construction if program linkages and conditions are satisfied.

Delta Conveyance – CALFED will depend on the existing Delta conveyance system with some modifications, evaluate its effectiveness, and add additional conveyance and/or other water management actions if necessary to achieve CALFED goals and objectives.

Will Californians Get More Water?

The Bay-Delta system is currently not able to reliably supply water for agriculture, urban areas and the environment. Proposed improvements to the Bay-Delta system -- such as water conservation, water recycling, water transfers, watershed management, changing the timing of when water is pumped from the Delta for export, and improving the way water flows through the Delta – will allow increasing demands for water to be satisfied, while reducing the environmental impacts of water diversions and restoring ecosystem health

Will the CALFED Plan Change Water Rights?

No. CALFED is not proposing any changes to existing water rights law.

Will Land Be Converted as Part of the Plan?

Implementation of levee system improvements, ecosystem restoration, and the water quality program will result in some land conversion. CALFED seeks to preserve as much agricultural land as possible, consistent with meeting all program goals. The government already owns some of the land needed for program implementation, and that land will be used when appropriate. Partnerships with landowners, including easements with willing landowners, will be pursued when appropriate and when suitable government land is not available. Acquisition of fee title to land for ecosystem restoration will be from willing sellers only, and will be used when neither available government land nor partnerships are appropriate or cost-effective for the specific need. Third-party impacts of such actions will be carefully evaluated and taken into consideration.

What will the CALFED Program Implementation Cost?

Preliminary cost estimates of Stage 1—the first seven years of CALFED's 30-year implementation

period – are approximately \$5.2 billion. Total program capital costs range from about \$9 billion to \$10.5 billion. Approximately \$4 billion of this cost is for the program elements, excluding Storage and Delta Conveyance. Up to \$5 billion of this cost would be for storage facilities, if a decision was made to implement all of the storage analyzed (6 million acre-feet).

How will the Program be Funded?

Financing will be raised over the next few decades through a combination of federal, state and user funds. The people of California are committed to improving the Delta, evidenced by the passage of Proposition 204 in 1996, which provided more than \$450 million for the CALFED Program's environmental enhancement efforts. Federal authorization for an additional \$430 million over three years was also secured. This funding for early implementation of the Program's environmental actions reflects the fundamental need to restore the ecosystem as an essential component of a comprehensive solution to Bay-Delta system problems. A fundamental philosophy is that costs should, to the extent possible, be paid by beneficiaries of the Program actions.

What Happens Next?

CALFED released the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR on June 25, 1999, commencing a 90-day public comment period. Fifteen public hearings will be held around the state during the comment period. Comments can be submitted at the hearings or in writing to the CALFED Program. When the public comment period is over, CALFED staff will incorporate the comments into the final document. The final programmatic EIS/EIR will then be released for a 30-day review period, likely in April 1999. Then, the CALFED state and federal lead agencies will be asked to certify the document, after which implementation and subsequent environmental review for site-specific projects will begin. Implementation will take place over approximately the next 30 years.

How Long Will it Take To Solve the Problems?

The CALFED Bay-Delta Program focuses on resolving long-term problems. While the full CALFED solution will be implemented over as many as 30 years, significant improvements are expected to begin in 2000, after the initial environmental review process is complete, and consistent with the need for any additional site-specific environmental review.

The preferred program alternative will be implemented in stages. Actions in Stage 1 of program implementation – the first seven years – will generally be more straightforward actions for which there is strong scientific understanding and justification. Other early actions will be designed to test hypotheses and conceptual models. Staged implementation allows for decisions to be made when more scientific information is available and the effects of previous actions are known.

Restoration Program Coordination

Some environmental restoration is already underway, as the 1994 Bay-Delta Accord called for the early implementation of nonflow related ecosystem restoration projects consistent with the overall Program. This provision is known as "Category III." To date, CALFED has funded 195 projects for a total of approximately \$228 million. Types of projects funded include fish screens, fish ladders, land acquisition, habitat restoration, and focused research and monitoring projects designed to provide information that will improve future restoration efforts. Funding for these projects come from the Federal Bay-Delta Act, State Proposition 204 and water user contributions.

Will there be an Isolated Facility or Peripheral Canal?

One of the proposed alternatives in the March 1998 draft EIS/EIR included a new Delta channel to take some water around the Delta from the north directly to export pumps in the southern Delta. This "isolated facility" differs significantly from the peripheral canal put before the voters in 1982, smaller in size and accompanied by a comprehensive interrelated package that also addresses ecosystem restoration, levee system integrity, water quality and water use efficiency.

The draft preferred alternative will use the existing Delta conveyance system with some modifications to achieve improvement in water supply reliability, Delta water quality, ecosystem health and levee system integrity. If CALFED goals for water quality and ecosystem restoration, the CALFED will consider additional conveyance facilities, including an isolated facility, and other water management actions.

How Is the Public Involved?

Since its inception in 1995, CALFED has worked with the public, urban and agricultural water users, fishing interests, environmental organizations, businesses, watershed organizations, and the public to define and evaluate alternatives for solving the problems confronting the Bay-Delta system. Already, thousands of Californians have contributed to the Bay-Delta Program by volunteering time, sharing expertise, and expressing ideas and opinions. Public meetings are held periodically throughout California, and topic-specific work groups hold meetings open to the public on a regular basis. In addition, a federally-chartered group of more than 30 representatives from the state's leading urban, agricultural, business and environmental interests are serving as members of the Bay-Delta Advisory Council, which meets regularly in a public setting to review the Program's progress and provide comment and advice.

Ultimately, it is the active participation of the entire public that will help fix the Bay-Delta. Government alone cannot solve the problem.

###

